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JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera addressing an election rally in 1982

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THE LESSON THAT SHOULD NOT BE LOST

Compared to the death toll, sometimes reaching as many as over one hundred a day, resulting from the unprecedented savage and brutal carnival of violence and counter-violence in south Sri Lanka, the number of deliberate politically motivated killings in the Tamil dominated North-East may be said to be low, but it nevertheless remains unacceptably high and unnecessary particularly since the cessation of 'offensive operations' by the IPKF. The IPKF has already pulled out of the eastern Amparai district and is expected to withdraw from Batticaloa shortly. The continuing deaths, disappearances and kidnapping are the direct outcome of the continuing fratricidal armed conflicts between Tamil militant groups and their actions.

With the projected departure of the IPKF by the end of December, the prospects for the people of the North-East are ominously flashing dangerously red. If what happened in the Amparai district on 5 November when the LTTE mounted attacks on the camps of its rivals – EPRLF, TELO and ENDLF – and the number of people killed in that encounter is anything to go by, the bloodletting that most people are predicting is expected to take horrendous proportions. The contending groups are making feverish preparations for what appears to be a certain suicidal war. In the end one group or the other may emerge 'victorious', but at what cost, for what purpose and for whose benefit?

In this situation of impending tragedy, certain public statements recently made by important spokesmen for the LTTE and EPRLF give hope for some optimism.

Mr. Anton Balasingham, the accredited spokesman for the LTTE, has stated that the LTTE was prepared to participate in fresh provincial council elections after the present provincial administration was dissolved. He asserted that the Tigers were prepared to accept the result of free provincial elections and added, 'If we are elected, we are prepared to embrace the Eelam People's Revolutionary Front (EPRLF). If we lose and they win, we are prepared to cooperate with them . . . Create the provincial police force. We are prepared to enter the police system. Let other groups also come . . . The Tigers are now committed to peace and a political solution. That's why we are willing to walk down a street, as policemen, rubbing shoulders with our rivals'.

The Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council, Mr. A. Varatharaja Perumal of the EPRLF is reported to have said that 'any differences between the LTTE and the EPRLF could be resolved through negotiation and dialogue. This is not a hero's cinema for others to see the blood of the Tamil people. The Tamil people have suffered enough. We need not fight among ourselves. If the LTTE agreed to come into the democratic process we are prepared for fresh elections. I am prepared to negotiate with the LTTE and if we have any differences we can settle them by dialogue'.

What these statements convey is that there is a convergence of views between these groups as to what should happen. If these gentlemen and their organisations are genuine in what they have stated publicly, they should take concrete steps to translate their words into actual deeds. As a first step, the EPRLF and its allies should forthwith cease conscripting young Tamils into the so-called Tamil National Army. The very method of forcible recruitment to it is most reprehensible and the move has made them more unpopular than they ever were. Whatever the motivations may have been for the formation of the TNA, the fact is that, besides pushing additional sections of Tamil society into the process of further militarisation and acclimatisation to gun-culture, the LTTE considers it as a force that is being mobilised to fight it and therefore has reacted accordingly. If the EPRLF and its allies are serious about their protestations of peace in our time with the LTTE, then they must abandon this self-defeating counter-productive exercise and begin making serious efforts to establish contact with the LTTE leadership, if need be through intermediaries.

In simultaneous reciprocity, in the spirit of what Mr. Balasingham has publicly stated, the LTTE leadership ought to take concrete steps to offer real reassurance to other Tamil groups, particularly to the EPRLF and its allies, who genuinely fear that they will become targets for physical elimination once the IPKF leaves. The LTTE has repeatedly asserted that it has the support of the vast majority of the Tamil people, and if this is the case the LTTE leadership should have no difficulty in openly recognising the right of other groups to exist, function and participate in political activities concerning the Tamil people. A categorical assurance on this question from the LTTE ought to remove any obstacles that may exist in the path of dialogue and negotiation among Tamil groups.

Whatever gains have been achieved so far by the Tamil people, they are the product of enormous sacrifices made by the entire community. They have been extracted from an unwilling and unyielding government in Colombo which was determined to suppress the struggle for the restoration of Tamil rights militarily. In the process of this struggle, several thousands have lost their lives. an estimated 250,000 Tamils left the land of their birth in search of refuge and security. The exodus is still continuing. The destruction and devastation in the Tamil areas are incalculable.

It should not be forgotten that neither the forces of the Sinhala chauvinist ideology have been irreversibly defeated nor have the institutions it created during the last four decades to maintain its domination been totally dismantled. An attempt to reassert its domination will certainly be made by seeking ways and means to deprive the Tamil people of the gains they have so far made. And the sure way of doing this is the age-old method that every cunning ruler or government has employed – divide and rule. The Colombo government in its present predicament may pose as a friend of one group chosen for the time being and even supply arms and provide safe sanctuaries to mount attacks upon its rivals. But once the rivals are eliminated, it will lose no time in seeking to destroy its chosen group. The lesson from what happened to Rohana Wijeweera and the rest of the JVP leadership this month even as President Premadasa was preaching his much publicised philosophy of 'consultation, compromise and consensus' should not be lost on the leaderships of Tamil groups.

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COLOMBO NEWSLETTER
by Chithra

Rohana Wijeweera & Top JVP Leaders Killed After Capture

15.11.89 – Many top leaders of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP-Peoples Liberation Front) including its founder-leader Rohana Wijeweera and General Secretary Upatissa Gamanayake have been killed by the security forces. What has astonished many are the bizarre official accounts of the circumstances in which they were reported to have been killed. Bluntly the JVP leaders had been captured alive, shot dead and their bodies cremated immediately thereafter by the security forces 'under conditions of maximum security'.

The 47 year-old Rohana Wijeweera and other leaders of the JVP went underground following the proscription of the party in the wake of the July 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom. Even though the ban on the JVP was lifted one-and-a-half years ago, the JVP leaders continued to remain underground having commenced a violent anti-government campaign.

According to reliable sources, the breakthrough for the security forces came with the arrest some days ago of a politburo member of the JVP, D.M. Ananda, who had succumbed to the 'treatment' given to him and led the security forces to the hideouts of many of the JVP leaders. On 12 November, he led them to a bungalow on a tea estate in the Ulapone area in the central hill district of Gampola. At the bungalow, the security forces found the elusive Wijeweera, his wife and five children.

According to JVP sources, the informant D.M. Ananda was shot dead by security forces personnel soon after Wijeweera was captured.

At a press conference given on 13 November in Colombo, the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, read out a letter from the Commander of Army, General Hamilton Wanasinghe, which stated that Wijeweera was taken to Colombo where he had broken down and wept during interrogation and made a long statement. The JVP leader also had 'volunteered' to make a public appeal to the nation's youth which was videotaped by the army. He also had 'voluntarily offered' to lead a combined police and army team to the JVP's headquarters in a suburb of Colombo. When Wijeweera and the team of security officers reached the JVP headquarters, the JVP leader apparently asked H.B. Herath, another deputy leader of the organisation to hand over all the documents and other articles the security officers asked for. After handing over some documents and while pretending to search for more, Herath had presumably pulled out a gun and fired at Wijeweera. The security personnel had 'reacted immediately and opened fire. In the course of this firing, Mr. Wijeweera and Mr. Herath received injuries to which they succumbed. Acting under emergency regulations, the officers took all steps necessary to cremate the bodies under conditions of maximum security', the Army Commander's letter stated.

Ranjan Wijeratne also told the pressmen that Mrs. Wijeweera and her five children were in 'protective custody'.

There is widespread scepticism as to the veracity of the official account of the circumstances of Wijeweera's death. JVP sources claim that its leader was summarily executed after the security forces had obtained all the information they wanted in the form of a statement and having videotaped an 'appeal to the youth to give up violence' by him.

JVP General Secretary Upatissa Gamanayake and six other top leaders of the JVP were apprehended in the central Kandy district on 13 November, within 12 hours of the JVP leader's arrest and execution. It is believed that Gamanayake and the others were traced on the basis of information given by Wijeweera himself. As in the case of Wijeweera, Gamanayake and his comrades were taken to Colombo, summarily executed after obtaining all the information the security forces wanted and then their bodies cremated. The government's version that Gamanayake and his colleagues were shot dead on the night of 13 November as they tried to escape from military custody has been received with total disbelief.

The JVP has been engaged in a violent anti-government campaign during the last two years. With a strange mixture of strong marxist rhetoric and Sinhala nationalistic slogans, the JVP's campaign demands have included the throwing out of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, abrogation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987, the abolition of the Provincial Council system introduced mainly to meet Tamil demands for autonomy, resignation of the President and the government, and the disbandment of paramilitary security forces. The JVP characterised the government and some opposition parties as tools of 'Indian imperialism' backed by 'Tamil separatist terrorist fifth column', a description it assigned to the Tamil militant groups. The main weapon used by the JVP in this campaign has been politically motivated assassinations not only directed against ruling party politicians and security service personnel, but also against those belonging to other opposition parties which disagreed with the JVP. Many leading and not so leading members of the SLMP, SLFP, CP, LSSP, NSSP, and former members of the JVP fell victims of these assassinations, among whom the most notable was Vijaya Kumaranatunga, the charismatic leader of the SLMP. It also targetted certain longstanding human rights organisations characterising them as 'anti-national'.

By the use of sheer force and threats of death, the JVP was able to paralyse vast sectors of industrial, transport, commercial, banking and administrative activities not excluding hospital services. Any one who disobeyed JVP dictates was dealt with summarily by its armed wing, the DJV. Hundreds of lowly placed state employees like Grama Sevakas and Sub-post masters and as many as 220 transport workers paid the price with their lives. The island's hospitals remained closed for over two weeks when the JVP ordered medical staff including doctors out of the hospitals and dozens of patients died during this period for lack of medical attention. The universities in the south of the island have remained shut for the last two years and two Vice-Chancellors have been murdered.

Equally violent and brutal was the response from the government and the security forces. Thousands of youth, on the mere suspicion of having JVP sympathies, were detained and subjected to the worst forms of torture. In apparent retaliation to JVP's actions, scores of suspected 'subversives' were killed as a matter of routine every day. Death squads associated with government party politicians and the security forces accounted for a considerable number of these killings. Even civil rights lawyers who took up cases on behalf of those alleged to be connected with the JVP were killed.

In spite of the extravagent countermeasures adopted by the government, the JVP'S campaign of assassinations, enforced strikes and economic sabotage was becoming more and more difficult for the government to subdue.

But in August this year the JVP made what has now proved to be its ultimate blunder. Driven by adventurism or afflicted by a supreme faith of its own invincibility or both, the JVP ordered the members of the security forces to throw away their uniforms and desert their posts as from the 18th of that month. The sanction for not obeying the JVP dictat was declared to be that all members of the families of security service would face death. Hitherto, the armed and police forces were engaged in a half-hearted and reluctant fight against an anti-government campaign and in the process were losing men. But now the JVP

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Tigers attack rival camps

Chris Nuttall in Colombo

The opening shot of what is expected to be a new war in Sri Lanka's north and east were fired yesterday, as the Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas attacked camps of the nascent Tamil National Army (TNA).

At least 74 people were reported killed in clashes in the eastern district of Amparai between the rival militant groups. The Sri Lankan army was sent in to end more than 12 hours of fighting.

Soldiers of the Indian Peace Keeping Force were completely withdrawn from Amparai on October 24. The Tigers had been fighting the Indian army for nearly two years and were expected to turn on groups which had collaborated with India during its occupation.

The Tigers' attack on two camps of the TNA, near the coastal town of Akkaraipattu, was the worst incident of violence since a ceasefire came into operation between the Indian army and the militants more than six weeks ago.

The TNA comprises Indian-backed groups who feel threatened by the Tigers. It has forcibly conscripted thousands of youths, who have been armed and trained with India's help.

The morale of these unwilling recruits has always been suspect and reports said more than 100 had surrendered to the Tigers, mostly without a fight.

More than 50 TNA soldiers were reported killed when their camps were attacked and 12 others died in two Tiger ambushes. The Tigers were said to have captured arms and ammunition, while losing half a dozen of their own men. They used boats to launch an attack by land and sea and employed mortars and rocket-propelled grenades in the assaults.

Five Muslims were killed in communal violence which erupted after the attacks and a Tamil boy was reported to have been tied to a Jeep and dragged along before being hanged.

The Tigers may have made a military error in attacking their enemies at this time. Amparai was the first district to be vacated by the Indian army under the September agreement with Sri Lanka to recall Indian troops completely by the end of the year.

But the prospect of the Tigers liquidating India's allies among the Tamil militant groups in the north and east could lead to India slowing its withdrawal.

Indeed, a complete pullout from the north and east by the end of the year seems logistically impossible. More than 35,000 troops are still in the country and the withdrawal rate has been 5,000 a month.

As they launched their eastern attack yesterday, the Tigers accused India of despatching 2,000 fresh troops into the northern Jaffna peninsula. The Tigers added that continued forced conscription of youths for the TNA had compelled them to reconsider their decision to observe the ceasefire declared on September 20.

(Courtesy, The Guardian, 6.11.89)

Continued From Page 3

had thrown down the gauntlet and the security forces were forced to pick it up to defend themselves as an institution apart from the government or its interests. No longer was it a case of only protecting the President, his cabinet and his government.

Even as President Premadasa was appealing to the JVP leaders to come forward for negotiations, the security forces launched an unrestrained private war against the JVP – a war to protect themselves and their family members. For every member of the family of a soldier or policeman killed by the JVP, 14 JVPers and their families would be killed, a poster put up everywhere by the security forces promised. And the promise was kept with a vengeance. Bullet riddled and burning bodies of suspected 'subversives' and their family members lying on roadsides and bodies floating in rivers became a familiar sight every day. Since August, it is estimated that the security forces and the JVP have caused the death of as many as seven thousand persons and the daily body count was rising sharply at the time JVP leaders were captured and executed.

With most of the top leaders of the JVP having been massacred, there is no doubt that the security forces have gained the upper hand. Although it is reported that, in the way they have been operating during the last three months, the security forces have been acting almost independently of Presidential control or approval, the decapitation of the JVP leadership may eventually lead to a consolidation of Premadasa in his hitherto shaky presidential seat.

DEAD BODIES BLOCK TRAFFIC

The bodies of 11 young men shot dead by suspected vigilante groups blocked traffic in central Sri Lanka on Monday in the latest wave of killings that have claimed at least 29 lives in past 24 hours, military sources and residents said.

They said the bodies were spread across a main road nine km (six miles) west of Kandy in the central hill province.

'Vehicles could not move for a few minutes, delaying schoolchildren and office workers,' a Kandy resident said by telephone. The bodies were later removed by the police.

Two other bodies were found in the Kandy area. One bore a note written in blood reading. 'This is a punishment for giving information to the police.'

Military sources said the Leftist People's Liberation front was active in the area. They said 15 Buddhist monks, one of them a university student, were among 40 youths detained by troops around Kandy on Monday.

An earlier government statement said 16 people were killed in the 24-hour period, including a civilian militiaman and three of his family in Ratnapura, 80km (50 Miles) south-east of Colombo. The attack was blamed on the front.

The statement said two rebels were killed in the south by troops who also recovered weapons, grenades and police uniforms.

In the north-central town of Anuradhapura, a soldier arrested for allegedly collaborating with the rebels was shot dead trying to escape, the statement said.

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A STALEMATE

by Rita Sebastian from Colombo

Although the inclusion of LTTE top ranker Sathasivam Krishnakumar, alias 'Kittu', in the third round of talks with the Colombo government last month fuelled speculation that a broad framework of agreement between the two sides would be made public, nothing of the sort happened.

The week-long deliberations over, the LTTE delegates went their own separate ways. Kittu, to London to be fitted with an artificial limb. Dr Anton Balasingham and wife Adele, to London as well, Lawrence Thilagar to France and Yogi back to base in the Mullaitivu jungles.

The Tigers were non-committal on their discussions with the Colombo government, except for the position they took vis a vis participation in the Peace Committee agreed under a second Indo-Lanka agreement signed on September 18th. To the Tigers the presence of a Tamil National army in the region was a serious impediment, to returning the region to peace and normalcy. It not only precluded the Tigers from involving themselves in any peace negotiations, but also from committing them to a definite timeframe to enter mainstream politics.

The Eelavar Democratic Front (EDF, the former EROS) opting out of the Peace Committee, for the same reason has only widened the rift between the Tamil groups. Although today, the Chief Minister of the EPRLF controlled North-East Provincial Council, Varatharajah Perumal has categorically denied to the Sri Lankan authorities the presence of any para-military force in the region, not so far back as October fourth he told pressmen in Colombo 'call it what you will, we will have a 30,000 strong force to meet any threat when the Indian forces leave the island's north and east'.

Chief Minister Perumal's warning was no idle threat for no sooner had the Indian troops vacated eastern Amparai on October 24th, the 'north-east militia' as self-designated 'Brigadier Khalid' of the Amparai command describes it, took over. And soon enough ran into problems, not only with the Sri Lankan government and other Tamil groups, but with other minority groups in the multi-ethnic district as well.

Reports of Sinhala villagers being ordered out of the district by the armed militia has gained wide publicity in the local media and called for the dispelling of the fears and anxieties of all communities through a legitimate law and order machinery.

Speaking from his newly opened 'headquarters' in Kalmunai Brigadier Khalid, who refused to divulge the strength of his forces saying 'remember you don't ask a Brigadier that question', didn't deny that his brigade did not comprise Citizens Volunteer Force personnel (CVF), armed by Sri Lanka and trained by Indian soldiers to fill the security vacuum when the Indian soldiers leave the north and east. The north-east militia was a separate outfit altogether armed with sophisticated weaponry and ready to move into any trouble spot in the region. Since its presence cannot be wished away by denying it exists, it is incumbent on both the governments, India and Sri Lanka, who are jointly overseeing IPKF withdrawal to see that the security vacuum when the IPKF leaves is filled by the legitimate forces designated by the two governments. CVF strength today is in the region of four to five thousand personnel although the targetted number is seven thousand. Expected to be deployed along with the Sri Lankan police, to maintain law and order in the north-east, they were however trained as a para-military force, their training involving besides policing, anti-terrorism training.

The original intention was to have the CVF interface with the Sri Lankan army but when objections were raised by the police high command, the idea was abandoned.

State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne has repeatedly pointed out that CVF deployment is an interim measure until a provincial police force can take over. CVF personnel would then be absorbed into the police force or they could opt for the army.

Meanwhile as Indian troop withdrawal gathers momentum and official figures put the number of troops remaining in the country at thirtysix thousand, there are doubts whether the December thirtyfirst deadline to move out every Indian soldier will be met.

There are of course problems of logistics but there is a general belief that India will not move out completely until she is sure that the EPRLF and its allies are equipped to handle the situation.

India quite happily keeps making periodic announcements that there have been no major violations of the September twentieth declared IPKF ceasefire, discounting of course the continuing internecine warfare between the Tamil groups, that has claimed civilian lives, those of Indian soldiers notwithstanding.

A curious, but not unexpected phenomenon, is that India has not abandoned its options where the LTTE is concerned. Under-cover negotiations have been continuing in spite of the armed confrontation between Indian forces and the Tigers. What Indian officials are quick to point out is that it is Indian interests that come first, and in that scenario nothing must be ruled out.

The Tigers too have always maintained that their doors to India remain open, and they would like to have Delhi recognise their place in the north-east region. Having discussions with the Colombo government and talking peace has not meant that the Tigers have called a halt to military activity.

In their camps and hideouts the Tigers continue with training their cadres and as Kittu said in an informal discussion in Colombo last month the young men are being trained in advanced technology as well.

From manufacturing improvised mines and grenades they have now graduated, he says, to the manufacture of more powerful mines. 'Johnny mines' named after their comrade Johnny, an emissary flown into Vavuniya by the IPKF last year to meet with LTTE leader Prabhakaran and later killed by them. And 'Arul grenades' named after one of their men killed last year, by Indian forces. They are rifle grenades that can be fired from a distance of three hundred yards. 'How else do you think we could have taken on the fourth largest army in the world' asks Kittu.

In the changing scenario of the north-east, nobody can predict the next act in the bloody drama, but given the bitter rivalry between the EPRLF and the LTTE, the fear is that an all out war between the two groups is not unlikely once the Indians leave.

And as an Indian army top brass put it, if the Sri Lankan government cheats on its committment to the North-East Provincial Council there is the real possibility of the EPRLF declaring UDI. Not even being left with some of the military hardware by the departing Indian soldiers can secure it for them unless they have the support of India.

On the other hand what is the Tiger strategy? They have not announced that they are dropping the demand for Eelam. LTTE theoretician Dr. Anton Balasingham made it known during the third round of talks, that if the North-East Council is dissolved and fresh elections are held and they take control, they will treat the North-East Provincial Council merely as an admi-

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nistrative structure and then ask the people what they want.

Supporters of the EPRLF in the south point to EPRLF's commitment to the unitary concept of the constitution where the Tigers choosing to remain silent on the Eelam demand have made the south wary of their real intentions.

The north-east conflict cannot be seen only from the perspective of the Tamil question. It has to be seen in the wider context of the country embroiled in violence and the demand by opposition political parties for the restructuring of the political system.

The All-Party conference from which much was hoped, has fallen apart with the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the traditional left opting out of any further deliberations.

A number of measures taken by President Premadasa like allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross into the island, the appointing of a youth commission to look into the causes of youth unrest, appointing a language commission to implement language policy and his recent appointment of a Land Task Force, an attempt to respond to southern unrest, has somehow managed for a time at least to halt the general discontent in the country.

His land policy has been motivated by his concern that the existing land reform legislation implemented during the SLFP regime of 1972 has led to an unequitable distribution of land and unproductive land being available to the landless poor. Another concern of the government, is the tendency of rural youth to move away from agricultural pursuits and seek urban employment.

Will these moves help solve the country's deepening crisis, with inflation expected to rise sharply with the removal of subsidies on consumer goods, an assurance given to the World Bank, and political unrest showing no signs of being resolved?

INDIA FORMING 'ARMY OF CRONIES' Says LTTE

The LTTE has accused the Indian government of organising 'an army of cronies' with the help of some Tamil militant groups, and called for the surrender of 'recalcitrant organisations' 'if they are only concerned about their safety'.

The following are extracts from a press release issued by the LTTE on 2 November:

'Under the pretext of defending the Tamil and Muslim people the Indian government is organising an army of cronies. A senior member of RAW, named Chandran is frequenting Trincomalee and supervising the military training.

The young boys and girls kidnapped by EPRLF, ENDLF, TELO, and PLOTE are being forcefully trained by the Indian army. An army of 12,000 strong is being created to serve the interests of Indian government.

The Tamil people will not be protected by these undesirable elements, instead they will use the arms to kill our innocent people, kidnap our young girls to be raped by Indian soldiers and to carry out armed robberies.

In the past, under the pretext of armed struggle these groups threw our young boys and girls to the Indian army. Today for their own self-preservation they are kidnapping and forcefully training the youngsters. When parents enquire about their missing children they get badly beaten up.

When the Indian forces withdrew from Amparai these undesirable elements set up camps where IPKF were before. Camps have been set up at the following places:

Tirukovil & Karaitheevu (3rd colony) – TELO
Konavil – ENDLF
Akkaraipattu (Wellington Cinema), Karaitheevu, Sammanthurai and Thambiluvil (Mehala Cinema) – EPRLF
Akkaraipattu (Santha Cinema) – EROS

These recalcitrant organisations are creating a force to destroy the Tamil people and their independence and claim to be democratic and peace loving organisations. Rather than risking the lives of our young men and women we look forward to our people meeting these undesirable gangs at the elections. If they lack the courage to meet our people at the ballot box and if they are only concerned about their safety they can surrender to us and we will guarantee their safety. Many of the recruits have already surrendered to us and we have ensured their safety.

If these Indian quislings create a force to serve their own self interest and that of Indian government then they themselves will be destroyed by that force.

'TAMIL NATIONAL ARMY DOES NOT EXIST'

The Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council, Varatharajah Perumal denied the existence of a Tamil National Army or any other army in the North and East.

Addressing a press conference at a Colombo hotel on 4 November, the Chief Minister said that the only group of armed Tamils in the area was the Citizens' Volunteer Force comprising 4,000 members.

The CVF is the Provincial Police Force which comes under the Central government, he said, adding that the membership of the force was to be increased to 7,000 with the approval of the government.

When it was pointed out that pictures of the Tamil militia had been published, Perumal said that it was a case of mistaken identity and that those pictured would have been bodyguards of Provincial Council members, or members of the CVF.

Mr. Perumal also alleged that the LTTE was preparing for war. 'LTTE is kidnapping people in Jaffna and demanding ransom.

He said that he had asked his members not to take any action against the LTTE in order to enable the Tigers to enter the democratic process. But he warned that if the LTTE violated or disturbed the peace or launched any attack on the CVF, then the Provincial Council would have to get involved in destroying the LTTE.

The Chief Minister however added that he is ready to have a dialogue with the LTTE and that if they agreed to come to the democratic process, he is willing to have fresh elections. 'We want the LTTE to realise the struggle of the Tamil people and come and join the democratic process', he said.

'I am prepared to negotiate with the LTTE and if we have differences we can settle them by dialogue' he said.

Appealing to the Tigers to lay down arms, the Chief Minister said that any differences between the LTTE and the EPRLF or the Provincial Council could be resolved through negotiation and dialogue.

This is not a hero's cinema for others to see the blood of the people. The Tamil people have suffered enough. We need not fight amongst ourselves', Perumal said.

He also revealed that India had agreed in principle to provide 5,000 automatic weapons on a loan to the Provincial Council. He said that this followed his request to the Sri Lanka government which in turn requested India.

The Chief Minister added that at the meeting of the security co-ordinating group last Friday, a number of major problems concerning the area had been solved. He said that he had proposed to the government that in the future, recruitments of personnel for the armed forces should be done on an ethnic balance. He said that presently there are 65,000 in the regular and volunteer forces in the country but there are only about one per cent Tamil people included.

If the Chief Minister's proposal is

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approved 21,500 Tamil speaking persons will be recruited to the armed forces within the next three years, he said. He said that he had proposed that 50 per cent of this number be recruited within the first year and the other 50 per cent in the next two years.

SLFP, LSSP & CP PULL OUT OF APC

The main opposition parties, Sri Lanka Freedom Party, Lanka Sama Samaja Party and the Communist Party have pulled out of the All Party Conference.

On 28 September, the SLFP Executive Committee adopted a resolution that the party should withdraw from the APC and together with other opposition parties 'launch a concerted agitational campaign against the government to bring to an end the current trend of killings and violence and also bring down the cost of living'.

The main demand of the opposition parties has been the abolition of the Executive Presidency and the formation of a provisional government which would hold fresh elections.

The resolution was proposed by Professor Vishva Warnapala and seconded by Mahinda Wijesekera, MP. Addressing the meeting, the SLFP leader Mrs. S. Bandaranaike said that the APC had now 'lost all direction and nothing worthwhile was emerging out of it'. Even while the APC was continuing, hundreds of killings were taking place and at the same time prices of essential goods were skyrocketing bringing untold suffering and misery on an already beleaguered people. The UNP government had totally failed to restore law and order and several SLFPers also had been killed under the guise of crushing subversion, she added.

Prof. Warnapala said that a crisis situation had emerged in the sphere of higher education in the country as a result of the continued closure of the universities. To prevent further youth unrest and frustration, and also to overcome an imminent dearth of intellectuals, the government should initiate immediate steps to re-open the universities.

IPKF TO MOVE OUT OF BATTICALOA

The Indian Peace Keeping Force which completed its 'deinduction' of troops from the Amparai district in the east on October 24 will next withdraw from the Batticaloa district, according to the Indian High Commission in Colombo.

Although relevant 'readjustments and preparations' were underway for the IPKF withdrawal from Batticaloa, no time frame had been set, according to Mr. M.P. Singh, the First Secretary of the Indian High Commission.

The Security Co-ordination Group comprising the State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne, Chief Minister of N-E Provincial Council Varatharaja Perumal and Senior Officers of the IPKF and Sri Lankan Army who met on 1 November discussed the post-withdrawal law and order arrangements for the Batticaloa district.

When the IPKF pulled out of the Amparai district, it was expected that two thousand personnel of the Sri Lankan police force would take charge of the law and order situation there. However, it was noted that quite a large number of armed Tamil youth comprising the North-Eastern Citizens' Volunteer Force had taken up positions in Amparai in an apparent attempt to fill the vacuum created by the IPKF pullout.

'ELECTIONS & TALKS OF PEACE' AFTER IPKF LEAVES

— Balasingham

'We cannot discuss peace with Indians around. After they go and after Indian-sponsored paramilitary units are disbanded, we must hold elections and then talk of peace', LTTE's accredited spokesman Anton Balasingham stated in Colombo as reported in **THE SUNDAY TIMES (29.10.89).**

Reiterating the LTTE's demand that the IPKF must leave before any political settlement could be achieved, Mr. A. Balasingham stated that the LTTE was prepared to contest provincial council elections. Calling for the dissolution of the North-East Provincial Council, he said 'the EPRLF was elected last November in a fraudulent poll backed by the Indians'.

The Tigers were also prepared to accept the results of free provincial elections. 'If we are elected, we are prepared to embrace the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). If we lose and they win, we are prepared to cooperate with them'. He added, 'Create the provincial police force. We are prepared to enter the police system. Let other groups also come. . . .The Tigers are now committed to peace and a political solution. That's why we are willing to walk down a street, as policemen, rubbing shoulders with our rivals'.

UNIONS DEMAND 50% WAGE RISE

Twenty nine trade unions affiliated to the Joint Trade Union Council have in a memorandum to President R. Premadasa put forward 12 demands for speedy action in view of the steeply rising cost of commodity items affecting living standards of the masses including wage earners.

Among the demands is a salary increase by 50 per cent subject to a minimum of Rs.2,500 per month.

The other demands are:

★ Reduce prices of medicine and other essential consumer goods and to impose a price-control on them.

★ Payment of Rs.5/- for each point of increase in cost of living index to all wage earners.

★ Payment of monthly wage to estate-workers.

★ Abolition of recovery of Income Tax from the earning of private sector employees.

★ Abolition of increased percentage of Widow and Orphans Fund from Public Sector employees without additional benefits to them.

★ Reinstatement of 1980 July strikers without conditions and remove punishments imposed on those already reinstated.

★ Appointments and promotions effected without political influence.

★ Make all temporary and contract employees, permanent.

★ Remove repressive regulations which hinder the free functioning of Trade Unions.

★ Remove the State of Emergency, suppression and terror and ensure democracy, and

★ Stop privatisation of government departments and other undertakings.

The Affiliated trade union organisations are:

Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions, Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya, Ceylon Federation of Labour, United Federation of Labour, Sri Lanka Mahajana Trade Union Federation, Public Service Trade Union Federation, Government Surveyors Association, Central Council of Ceylon Trade Unions, Samastha Lanka Rajaye Lipikaru Sangamaya, Government United Federation of Labour, Sri Lanka Mahajana Government Trade Union Federation, Government Workers' Trade Union Federation, Democratic Workers' Congress, Sri Lanka Independent Trade Union Federation, National Union of Workers, Government Dental Surgeon's Association, Local Government Clerical Union, Ceylon Plantation Workers Union, United Corporation Mercantile Union, Desha Vimukthi Kamkaru Samithi Sammelanaya, Ceylon Trade Union Federation, Central Bank Employees' Union, Lanka General Service Union, Sri Lanka Inland Revenue Service Union, Local Government Clerical Service Union, Insurance Workers Union, Ceylon Teachers' Union, Ceylon Railway Guards' Union and, Joint Front of the Water Supply & Drainage Board Trade Unions.

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COMMEMORATING RAJINI

Rajini Thiranagama

As reported in our last issue, Dr. Rajini Thiranagama, head of the Anatomy Department of the University of Jaffna was gunned down by a lone 'unidentified gunman' on 21 September in Jaffna. Reproduced on this page is a statement made by the University Teachers for Human Rights.

The UTHR(J) are organising a Rajini Commemoration event on 21 November to mark the 60th day of her death. The event is to take the form of the publication of a Commemoration Volume, a public meeting preceded by a peace march, seminar and workshops. The UTHR(J) have invited delegates from other parts of Sri Lanka and from abroad to participate in this event. In the letter calling for participation, the UTHR(J) states, 'It is widely known that in the community at large there are strong feelings against violence and politics of all sides that continues to trap very young persons into carrying arms. But there is fear of expressing such feelings openly. This led to the idea of observing the occasion in the manner that would enable the public to participate . . . A particular reason for this time being appropriate for such occasion is that a ceasefire is being observed, negotiations are going on and peace is being talked about. A surge of public expresion from outside can influence the process. It may also create space for the emergence of people's organisations and healthier political alternatives.

'Rajini's killers remain unidentified and at this stage we do not want to ask who did it. What is certain is that all forces, both official and unofficial, have used assassination as a political tool. On the positive side, particularly in Tamil areas, all the forces do not wish to be seen internationally as being responsible for inhuman acts. 'This gives us hope that frequent visits and close monitoring by international human rights organisations will provide a valuable complement to the work of local groups, as well as an expression of solidarity'.

A Time of Challenge and Re–evaluation

On 21st September 1989, Dr Rajini Thiranagama, a live wire and leading member of the UTHR(Jaffna) was murdered while returning home, a few yards from the Faculty of Medicine where she worked. One may ask, in a community benumbed by hundreds of senseless killings and driven to protective indifference, what is the significance of this particular murder? To be sure, as many speakers have pointed out at commemoration meetings, the killing was a dastardy act against a lone, helpless and unarmed woman, and a mother of two little girls. Its phenomenal significance lay in what the killers were trying to destroy. This representad a whole spectrum of values which Rajini upheld both in practice and precept and deemed both by her and fellow members of the UTHR as being necessary for the life and freedom of the community. Her field of activities included, telling the truth about the unpleasant side and hypocrisy of this suicidally-bent community, the practice of academic freedom, telling students that some of their views were simplistic and narrow, and practical involvement in the concerns of women who had suffered.

The killing was very different from what one might expect from an undisciplined military force in a state of anger. It was coldly premeditated and meticulously planned. Even the detail of minimum disruption, by scheduling the killing just after the last viva voce examinations in anatomy had been looked into. The murder took place on the second day of the ceasefire. The killer had waited at a relatively lonely spot that she would have to pass while rushing home from work to care for her little ones. He had even found the time, after Rajini had fallen, to park his bicycle and pump a few more bullets into her head, before making his escape.

Fascist Regimentation

Even Rajini's death brought out from the society around many of the attributes of fascist regimentation – the antithesis of a freedom struggle – the very thing Rajini had stood against throughout her career. On hearing the assassin's shots, with the exception of a few medical students and some ordinary people, the rest ran away or shut themselves inside their homes. It was difficult to find a vehicle to transport her to hospital. Those who volunteered to look after her children or visited them the night following the killing were neither neighbours nor colleagues. There was fear of association. Many close to the family admitted fear of attending the funeral and the meetings which followed. Far from showing a sense of solidarity and outrage, the local medical profession and her faculty colleagues were divided and confused as to how to respond to this killing. No doubt everyone knew that it was wrong and totally unjustified, not least the killers. The latter chose silence and anonymity. Rajini's friends and admirers were many who had enjoyed her personal care and had benefited from the many risks she had personally undertaken. Her enemies were those who were against what she stood for, but would not say it openly, lest they expose before the people their emptiness, real motivations and intentions. Yet initially at least, the dominant reaction to her killing, as for other killings, was not anger but a mixture of sadness and fear. This was the society, pliable and spiritless, that her killers were trying to build; and herein lies the chief significance of the event.

The future of Education

The UTHR(Jaffna) in its reports over the last year, concentrated on exposing the devaluation of human norms by all armed groups, relying only on the strength following from integrity. It also attempted to foster, from within the community, discussion of the social dimensions of its drift towards a fascist order. This was thought of as a necessary self-purifyng process. Rajini was amongst those most conscious of the truism that we cannot condemn the society as aliens outside it, but that we must examine ourselves as part of the problems and our conduct and attitudes as contributory to the growth of evils. Thus in many senses the men who held the guns were some of the most tragic victims of this society. Rajini's anger was never unmixed with compassion.

It was this realisation that impelled Rajini and several others to strengthen their efforts at tackling problems within the university as members of staff unions, as student counsellors and as members of Senate and Faculty Boards. Nearly all those who felt a need for reform, from professors to assistant lecturers, became members of the UTHR, student counsellors, of whom Rajini was one, had one of their busiest times dealing with problems faced by students in the way of arrest and security, together with specific problems of new entrants. Amongst the most important issues within the university was the exercise of adminstrative power in a system where the hierarchical differences had been strengthened while channels of accountability had fallen into disuse.

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An important event in the university during this period was the setting up of the co-ordinating Committee of staff, students, executives and employees unions, with the Vice Chancellor as chairman. It has stood up to several tests in dealing with crises involving the university.

Many saw this urge for reform as crucial for the raising of educational standards, as well as for the elimination of violence in the society in general.

Irreplaceable setback

A crucial element in the maintenance of educational standards is the return of those who go abroad for doctoral training. After the July 1983 riots it almost came to be taken for granted that such persons would not return. Administrators thought they would be lucky if only the bond obligations, which included travel and salary advances, could be collected. Meanwhile the exodus of trained persons continued. Rajini's example is a case in point. In this country which has five medical colleges there were four trained Anatomists (three now) to run a proper Anatomy course. Each medical college requires a number of Anatomists, Anatomy being the key preclinical subject. Rajini ran the department single-handed, making many sacrifices to uphold standards. If not for Rajini's ability as an administrator in representing the problems of an assistant lecturer whose research program suffered because of war difficulties, the university would have lost an Anatomist who is now under training in Britain. The training of doctors in Jaffna has now suffered an irreplaceable qualitative setback.

In spite of the disincentives, a number of trained academics returned in recent times. They did not come for the salaries or for the research facilities. They came because they felt an obligation to answer the challenge, and because they felt that the community had a need of people who would take a principled stand on issues. They did not think themselves extraordinary, but wished to be ordinary working people and a sobering presence. This is attested to by the fact that all four persons, including Rajini, who returned from Britain with doctoral degrees from early 1987, have been committed and active members of the UTHR. Thus the educational advancement of the Tamils is linked to the society demonstrating that it values and has room for commitment of this kind.

In Rajini's own case, she had with three other academics co-authored 'The Broken Palmyrah' in early 1988, which attempted to examine impartially the Tamil predicament. It spoke frankly about the actions of state powers and militant groups, and their ideologies. Rajini was conscious of the risk and had referred to her possible death a number of times. Personal letters in her possession and letters written by her, testify to a number of friends and those of influence putting pressure on her to remain in Britain while she was there for a three month research stint. But, Rajini came back on 3rd September. Two commitments uppermost on her mind were the Anatomy viva voce examinations for the 2nd MBBS and the teething problems of Poorani Illam, a women's rehabilitation centre she had helped to start. Her killers were cynical enough to wait for her to complete her examinations.

A letter addressed to the Vice Chancellor soon after her return from England, and read out by him at the first commemoration meeting on 2nd October, says much about Rajini. In it she informed the Vice Chancellor of her research successes and went on to say, **'There is no life for me apart from my people. So here I am'**. It is this kind of commitment and integrity that the killers find most unwelcome. The Tamil society they have in mind is one that is spiritless, uncaring, where every man fears his neighbour and which is moreover a cultural, educational and intellectual desert.

The protest

In every crisis, however numbing the initial shock, there are mysterious well-springs from which strength flows. From grinding fear and feeling that there was no option but flight, the move to protest, to express disgust and to perserve the integrity of Rajini's work and memory gained momentum. Students, staff and members of the public joined forces to give it strength. Where men faltered, women and girls stepped in. The impossible became possible as fear waned. Students went about putting up defiant posters all over Jaffna. Three well attended commemoration meetings were held – University of Jaffna (2nd October), Jaffna College (4th October), Chundikuli Girls College (6th October). The last was very encouraging in view of the feeling and help forthcoming from staff members and senior girls. On the morning of 2nd October, the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of Arts led the largest demonstration in the history of the university. Up to almost the time the demonstration set off, the general opinion was that it would be lucky to have two hundred participants. The eventual figure ran into thousands. All this took place against a backdrop of terror and fear of the unknown.

It is one thing to discover strength and quite another to deploy it effectively. If a university and its members forget that it is much more than a degree-awarding institution, it surely dies. A university is a place where people are trained for positions of leadership as citizens of the modern world. Not only does a university implant in persons a respect and assertion of human rights, but it is also part of a process that helps the community to enjoy human rights such as obtaining control over their environment. Nothing is assured. Whether the university or the UTHR will stay alive are matters that cannot be determined by our resources alone. We are unsure of our next step. It is a reality that in a society where only mad men and gun men are deemed fit to take risks, the students who came forward to give the lead in protest activity are exposed and live in fear. We need all the help and understanding that we can get . . .

An appeal

A large number of persons living both in the South of the country and abroad, have over the years shown a sincere concern for the Tamil problem. But it is not widely recognisd that it has moved far from the simple ethnic problem that it was seen to be in 1983. It is now one where for the short term at least, the internal dimensions have by far overshadowed the external. ***We appeal to all, particularly the Tamils abroad, to be sensitive to this new reality that faces us, and not to jeopardise those tendencies that work for greater accountability from within. What faces us now is a battle for basic humanity and civilised values. Its outcome will decide whether Rajini and many others died in vain.***

(statement by the University Teachers for Human Rights (Jaffna), mid-October, 1989)

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SEVEN DAYS IN JAFFNA

By Professor N. Shanmugaratnam
(Agricultural University of Norway)

I spent seven intense days in Jaffna from 23 to 30 June 1989. Before that, my last visit was in April 1982. In the intervening seven years the North and East of Sri Lanka have gone through a brutal civil war and an almost permanent state of internecine armed conflicts between rival Tamil militant groups. I went to Jaffna almost two years after the 'Peace Accord' and the arrival of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF). The visit was mainly for professional reasons. I was there on behalf of a European humanitarian aid agency to evaluate a rehabilitation programme supported by it in the North and East. The target groups of this programme consisted of the poorer victims of the civil war. I visited twelve villages in the North from Kayts to Kilinochchi and met with more than 600 villagers, of whom about 7 per cent were women. My professional work took me to a stratum of Tamil society that has been most severely hit by the war before and after the Accord, and to families that cannot afford the money to send their children out of the country as students or 'political refugees'. These are the sons and daughters of the Tamil homeland for whom peace, freedom and dignity are a life and death question. In my seven days of perambulations across and outside the Jaffna peninsula I did not witness any bomb blast, ambush or massacre, but I saw and heard the agonies of the daily, the hourly struggles of ordinary households to survive. This subversion of household economies is a relatively unknown, undocumented aspect of the violation of human rights in the current situation. In a place where this has been going on for years, it is not dramatic any more and does not make sensational headlines. It is 'normal' life. I also met with some old friends and young activists and analysts who enlightened me on various aspects of the present situation. . . .

The Golden Rule

My uncle and aunt received me with mixed feelings of joy and concern about my security. A few minutes after I had got into my sarong and sat down in the living room, my uncle – a retired public servant – told me, 'you must be careful here. I don't know what kind of programme you have but you must avoid politics. This is not the place for a man of your temperament. You see, you must not get into polemics with anyone, those days are over'.

The 'jungle telecommunication system' is quite efficient in Jaffna. Within half an hour of my arrival a friend came to see me. With his usual lively grin he said, 'Welcome to Jaffna, but remember the golden rule here: you open your mouth for two things only, to brush your teeth and to eat'. This is the agony of Jaffna wrapped in a pithy humour that is characteristic of all Lankans.

I spent the day visiting friends and relatives, listening to their outpourings of grief and anger. The days of the Sinhala army had receded somewhat to the back of people's minds. The post-Accord militarisation has made them feel that one occupation army has been replaced by another, and a more ferocious one at that. A middle-aged woman told me, 'We thought the IPKF would save us from the Sinhala army and from our own trigger-happy boys. We don't see the Sinhalese these days, but our agonies have more than doubled. Now we have to be protected from the fourth largest army in the world and our own boys – all of whom are killing Tamils. There is no hope for us'. . . .

Had discussions with three groups of farmers and rural workers in the Neervely-Kopay area. Two groups were entirely women, about a hundred, the other was mixed. Most of them were recipients of or aspirants for a soft loan scheme for agriculture and self-employment supported by the humanitarian organisation referred to earlier. Why so many women at these meetings, I wondered. The question was answered by one of them: 'These days men are exposed to so many dangers. The IPKF and its local allies are hunting for Tigers. You don't have to be a real Tiger, if they suspect that you support them or are related to a Tiger, that is enough. Young boys especially are not safe. And now, a worse thing is happening. EPRLF, TELO and ENDLF are conscripting boys for military training. They are taking away our boys by force. How can young men come out without fear? Most of the time they are in hiding. The result is men are unable to play their usual role in earning the household's livelihood. So, we have taken over their role too. This is what is happening in all the villages'.

Overworked Women

But there is a limit to what the already overworked women can do. The consequences of the insecurity of the men due to the military situation is the economic and social insecurity of the household. One of the most shocking aspects of Tamil society in the midst of all these hardships is the continuing discrimination against women in the labour market. The wage-gap between males and females is incredible: whereas a man would earn Rs60 per day, a woman would earn only Rs25. The wage difference is maintained even when women are hired for the so-called hard tasks which are traditionally assigned to men. An adult woman and a child of 14 years are paid the same wage. . . .

Had an interesting discussion with a woman involved in a development programme. According to her, alcoholism, illicit liquor-making and prostitution were growing in Jaffna. she talked about the implications of the breakdown of civil society and militarisation for the women workers in the peninsula. Basic labour regulations are not observed, and there is no authority to enforce them. This is one reason why women's wages are so low. shop-owners in Jaffna town have brought girls from the Eastern Province and employ them at Rs200-300 per month. This, she observed, cannot be stopped as the labour department is not functioning and there is no alternative authority, nor is it possible to wage trade union struggles.

She also commented on the problems of widows and rape victims. There are thousand of widows and hundreds of rape victims. The latter's situation is made more complex by the attitudes of 'our own people towards these unfortunate women. We must find ways of helping them to return to normal life without moving them out of the community. They have no reason to feel guilty of a crime committed on them by someone else. Our people should be educated to understand this and their responsibility in returning these women to normal life'. Some very poor young widows have been driven to prostitution just to survive. . . .

Manipay is an area of heavy military presence. The stories people told me were very similar to those I had heard from the farmers I met yesterday – shortages of inputs and price hikes, crop damage by IPKF, etc. One old woman, about 70 years of age, stood up with rage in her eyes and said, 'Our men are either dead or in hiding. Our boys have to go underground to avoid conscription, our young girls have to be kept indoors to protect them from sexual assault. We, the mothers and grandmothers, run the farms and the households most of the time'. . . .

Blessed Are The Barren

I reached Pandateruppu with a hurt and disturbed mind. But as I listened now to a group of about fifteen women who talked about their daily struggles and traumas, I felt that what happened to me was nothing. Humiliation gave way to humility.

Pandateruppus's problems were basically the same as those of the other

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villages, but these women were even more outspoken about the political situation. Two of them were particularly articulate and their language flowed like poetry. I am just not capable of capturing the poetry of their free-flowing Tamil and putting it into English. One of them, a mother of a teenage boy, expressed her anguish in a language almost biblical. 'Blessed are those who are barren', she said, 'for to have a son is to lose him. It was a joy to see my child grow up. Now, that joy has turned to grief. I ask God why he gave me this son. I would have been a happier woman today, if I did not have a child at all'. . . .

For the first time in my field visits I also heard some very frank opinions about Tamil expatriates. A tenant farmer and part-time agricultural labourer said, 'We and our boys have suffered untold hardships for years, and we continue to suffer. Those Tamils who had the means to escape, to run away to Europe, may be waiting to come back to rule us when the war is over. They are the worst kind of Tamils. We cannot allow them to enjoy the fruits of our sweat and blood'. . . .

We had been advised to leave Kilinochchi early as the situation was rather tense. On our way back, somewhere near Mirusuvil, we saw a group of colourful Kavadi dancers dancing to a Sinhala baila tune played on the traditional Tamil instruments, the nahaswaram and thavil. They were dancing their way to a local temple. One thing that had struck me was the heightened religiousness of the people. Wherever I went, I saw many people praying at temples. On the way back, at a big Vishnu temple near Jaffna, I saw a woman crying and singing a song for god Krishna. She might well have been praying for her teenage son to be saved from conscription. **In a land without freedom religion is indeed the 'sigh of the oppressed, the heart of a heartless world'. When one cannot open one's mouth in public to speak one's mind, speaking to god is the safest outlet. God, at least, is not known to be an informant!** But, ironic as it may seem, the Indian soldier and the ordinary Tamil worship the same gods in Jaffna; and in all probability both of them are praying for the same thing – personal safety! I saw it at the Nallur temple.

Taste of Peacekeeping

On the road from Madduvil to Chunnakam I witnessed a horrible scene at Eevinai. I saw an Indian soldier hitting a farmer on the head with his rifle butt just ten metres away from our car. As I turned away from that gory sight, I saw on the other side of the road, four *jawans* dragging two youths into a truck at gunpoint. That was a slight taste of the 'peace-keeping style' of the IPKF. I was, of course, convinced even before I saw these scenes that the IPKF was not professionally equipped to keep the peace. India did not build the fourth largest army in the world with peace-keeping in the region in mind! And, we are not living in the days of Dharmasoka or Elara.

It was a day full of political discussions with friends at the university. I was told about the arrest and torture of undergraduates by the IPKF. Many male and female students from Jaffna university have been arrested and tortured by the IPKF and its allies. Some of the accounts of torture were blood curdling. One brave group has produced a two-volume documentation of human rights violations by the IPKF and Tamil militant groups, including the LTTE which has shot several people on charges of collaboration with the Indian army and the Provincial Council. The volumes bear the pregnant title *The Broken Palmyrah*. Palmyrah, as alluded to before, symbolises the endurance of the Jaffna people. The title captures the social dislocations, the deprivations and the broken morale of the Jaffna society. 'Where have we ended up after so many years of struggle?', asked a friend. 'Do you get any impression of any kind of liberation, are there any signs that we have moved forward? In many respects we are more unfree than before we started. The way our people welcomed the IPKF was a show of their desperation. They had virtually lost hope in the militants who were spending more of their energies in fighting each other and, in the process, killing a lot of innocent people. People had a feeling that the 'boys' were too divided and politically too adolescent to deliver them to the promised land of Eelam. In a fundmental sense our liberation struggle has yet to begin'.

Soil Without People?

If casteism and the status of women in today's Jaffna are any indicators, the liberation struggle has made hardly any impact on the social structure and reactionary values of the Tamil society. As we discussed the women's and caste questions, I remembered something I had heard from a woman just before I got into the car after the meeting at Pandateruppu. 'They (the militants) talk of liberation of our land. They vow to fight to the last to defend the Tamil soil. They are heroic, but what is this soil without us, the people?'

'We must rediscover our humanity before we can go further', said a young man with glistening eyes. 'The biggest casualty of this struggle in the name of liberation is the most cherished value of liberty itself'.

A student from the plantation area up country made an acute observation about Jaffna society. 'As individuals, the people are highly literate and admirably persevering, but as a community, they are not progressive; on the contrary, they are conservative, reactionary'.

I met a small group of teachers and students who were interested in discussing the role of social movements in the struggle for restoration of civil society. An interesting point was raised and discussed at some length. What represented the state in the Tamil areas? In the last two years the Sri Lankan state has not been visible. Its military apparatus has been withdrawn and the IPKF has filled that role. Its bureaucracy has become dysfunctional without any alternative structures. To the ordinary people state means authority, and they equate authority with the IPKF and the various Tamil militant groups. If the IPKF left, the Sri Lankan army would be back, and with that the Sri Lankan state back too. For those concerned with restoration of civil society, the struggle is against militarisation in general.

Jaffna and the rest of the Tamil homeland is in the agonising grip of a new subculture of machine-guns and bombs, which knows only one way to deal with dissent. 'LTTE set the style of militarism, groups like EPRLF are trying to imitate that style in their own ways. It is a never ending cycle of the brutalisation of our society, as some of our intellectuals have called it'. The more militarily strong a group, the more anti-intellectual it is, the more it spurns serious political discussion and debate. Revolution is not a dinner party, but if the gun, and not politics, is in command, it is strange to call it a liberation struggle. The passionate words of that young man are so significant. Yes, we must rediscover our humanity before we go further. There is nothing called Tamil soil (it is as empty as the talk of a Tamil blood). There is only the oppressed Tamil nation. AK47s are not enough to free them. It was a very useful, though in many ways an unfinished, discourse.

Opportunist Behaviour

Attended a discussion at the Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation (TRRO) in the morning. The discussion centred on the loss of human lives, mostly able-bodied males, and the destruction of means of production. So far, 4,000 widows, whose husbands were killed by the Sri Lankan and Indian armies and Tamil militant groups, have appealed to TRRO for relief from within Jaffna alone. The actual number of widows in the peninsula is certainly more than that, and when the whole of North and East is taken

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into account, the figure may exceed 30,000. An important question was raised: Are we going to restore the old social structure in the name of rehabilitation or are we going to create new structures? This is, indeed, a part of the whole question of what the liberation of the Tamil people means.

Later in the day, I spent a lot of time reflecting on many things and writing notes. I recollected something said by a man the previous day about the social psychology of people living under conditions of growing brutalisation. It all began with his comment about the community's responses to the murder of Government Agent Punchalingam. He was a popular civil servant. It was also widely known that he had developed a good working relationship with the LTTE. When the news of his death came out, the first reaction of many people was that the EPRLF must have been behind it. People were angered about the murder of 'a golden person like the GA'. But when the LTTE claimed responsibility for the killing, the same people who had called Punchalingam 'a golden person' changed their tune, and now they started wondering, 'Perhaps he did something wrong'. It was not actually the murder of 'a golden person' they had been condemning in the first place, but the murder had provided an excuse for condemning a particular group. This 'opportunist' behaviour of the people, according to the man I talked to, reflected the psychology of survival under conditions of militarisation.

Those people who changed their minds did so partly due to fear of and partly due to their 'faith' in the LTTE. When I asked him to explain 'faith', he said that most people in the North felt that the LTTE was the most reliable of all groups as a protector under conditions of armed hostilities. Of course, this dependency has a complex history. But at the level of a local community, it is a question of survival by an unarmed people in the midst of continuing militarism. 'It is the military capacity and heroism of the guerrillas against what the people perceive as the enemy, as the alien, that are critical in this context, not the politics of any group', he said.

Diploma Disease

When I come home from the field, it is like coming into another sector of the Jaffna society. Politics is, of course, a topic in every home in Jaffna. But its terrain and nuances change as you cross class and caste lines. Jaffna is basically a petty-bourgeois society, or one may say that it has a broad 'middle class' consisting of several social layers and status groups. A preoccupation of this middling world is the social mobility of the children via education. Parents and children are engaged in unending talks about grades at 'O' level and 'A' level. It is a social stratum that is deeply afflicted by the 'diploma disease'. Private tutories are a thriving industry in the midst of the inhuman war. The walls of Jaffna are full of posters advertising them. The scramble for places in the medical and engineering faculties exceeds all imaginable limits. Competition among the students takes the form of competition between families who want their children to enter the more coveted faculties. Petty jealousies and rivalries are part and parcel of life. And when a youth cannot make it to the engineering or medical faculty, as is the case with most of them, the parents go all out to send him or her abroad. These days, most parents want to send their children abroad in any case, because that is a way to save them from joining a movement or getting shot or arrested by the army.

Jaffna has its paradoxes. Jaffna's survival seems to depend on a combination of two apparently irreconcilable approaches – communalist and individualist. On the one hand, at the local level one sees a lot of community spirit and great self-organising skills. On the other, it is a highly atomised society, perhaps because of its petty-bourgeois character. One sometimes wonders if Adam Smith's self-interested, rational, egotistic individual was first born in Jaffna. Both the community spirit and atomisation have gathered momentum in the people's bid for survival during the civil war.

Met a mother whose 19-year-old nephew was taken away by force by the EPRLF. She referred to the boy as 'my son'. Her sister, the boy's mother, was not living, so she is now the caretaker of her sister's family.

'He is a student at the Anaicoddai school. On the day of Nainativu Amman temple's car festival (15 June), just after dinner, five or six boys came and dragged him into a vehicle. I don't know where they are keeping him. I know it is EPRLF. As they were taking my son out, I and his sisters went after them pleading with them not to take the only boy we had. The boys were very rude to us and told us that he would not be released. I went to Asoka hotel (where the EPRLF office is) so many times and asked them to at least show me my son. They said, 'why are you making such a fuss? We are also the children of mothers. We are going to train him as a fighter. We need people. Moreover, there is no school these days'. There were 200-300 mothers like me pleading with the EP fellows. They showed us some children lined up on a balcony some way away. But no mother could recognise her son because they all had very short hair and clean-shaven faces. It is more than twelve days since we saw our boy last. he is very timid and scared of guns. You know, when they took him he was praying them not to take him because he is so scared of all these things. His sisters cried and begged them not to take their brother, but they showed their guns and shouted 'Shut up. We will shoot you women'. His father was a toddy tapper, now he is a sick person'.

Obsession With Power

There was a time when the EPRLF had a base among the people. After the annihilation of many of its cadres by LTTE, the EPRLF leaders retreated to India. They returned after the Accord, but they have not been able to develop a solid mass base in the North. Instead, they became dependent on the IPKF, and alienated themselves from the people whom they are supposed to be governing through the Provincial Council. The Provincial Council has no teeth. The EPRLF and its allies have chosen to operate almost exclusively via the Indian government and behind the IPKF, which was by now fighting a war with the LTTE. Their obsession with power and the impending final battle with the LTTE have made them insensitive to the sufferings of the people and pushed them into total militarism and subservience to the Indian state. Today, they are more alienated from the people than ever. Their militarism has further undermined their already questionable legitimacy as people's representatives. Many of those who shared criticisms of the IPKF-EPRLF-ENDLF-TELO alliance were equally critical of the LTTE, but in the prevailing atmosphere, anyone who opposes the EPRLF is branded by them as pro-LTTE.

Of the major militant organisations EROS has the least militarist posture in the North, although many people I met suspected that it was responsible for the death of Mr Kandasamy, a famous campaigner for Tamil rights and founder of the Tamil Information Centre in London (who had returned from there in 1987 to help the peace process back home through economic development), *Saturday Review*, and TRRO. There is a general impression that EROS cadres are more friendly with the people and are willing to listen to them.

Somewhat jokingly, one person remarked that EROS seemed to be having a lot of development plans, but he wondered how they were going to implement them without power. It appears that EROS has adopted a middle, non-militarist course between India and the LTTE, while condemning IPKF's atrocities.

The whole island is in the repressive clutches of three alignments which are poised against each other: The UNP-LTTE, the JVP plus its allies within

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LTTE KEEPS OUT OF 'PEACE COMMITTEE'

A.C.S. Hameed, Chairman of the North-East Peace Committee and Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology had consultations with the LTTE delegation led by Anton Balasingham. The other members of the delegation were Krishnakumar Kittu, Yogaratnam Yogi and Lawrence Thilagar, a Government communique stated.

It added, in welcoming the delegation, the Minister said that the decision of the LTTE to enter the democratic process is an encouragement to all those who cherish democratic ideals and values.

Mr. Balasingham emphasised that the LTTE is firmly committed to peace and that any conflict should be resolved by peaceful dialogue. They have been able to have successful peace talks with the Sri Lanka Government. Consequent to this, they have declared a cessation of hostilities and also made a firm commitment to enter the political main stream through the electoral process.

While welcoming the genuine efforts that are being made by the Government of Sri Lanka to restore peace and normalcy in the North and the East, Mr. Balasingham said that they are deeply concerned about the formation of the so-called Tamil National Army. The people of the North and the East are against the formation of this illegal army.

Mr.Balasingham said that the LTTE has decided not to participate in the Peace Committee meetings because of the formation of the illegal army.

However, he said, that the LTTE will continue their direct talks with the Government of Sri Lanka, and make every contribution to the efforts being made for the restoration of peace and normalcy.

Mr Hameed said that the LTTE is an important constituent in determining the future of the people of the North and East.

Their participation at all levels will create the necessary climate for political and civilian activity.

Mr.Hameed further said that the future of the North and the East is dependent on three factors, viz, the withdrawal of the IPKF, the coming together of all the militant groups and the creation of better understanding among all ethnic groups. He urged the LTTE to participate in the Peace Committee meetings to realise these objectives, which are of vital importance to the future of the country.

Mr.Balasingham said that he would convey the request of the Minister to the Central Committee of the LTTE. Mr. Hameed will continue the process of consultations with the other members of the Peace Committee.

TULF ON THE MURDER OF ITS LEADERS

TULF leaders, A. Amirthalingam and V. Yogeswaran were assassinated in Colombo on 13 July, and M. Sivasithamparam was seriously injured. The following is the text of a statement issued by the TULF through its branch in London:

On the fateful 13th day of July 1989 the voice of the Tamil Eelam nation was silenced by an assassin's bullets. The three members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam met Mr. Amirthalingam and his colleagues Mr. Yogeswaran and Mr. Sivasithamparam ostensibly to talk peace and bring about unity among the Tamil groups. They shot and killed Mr. Amirthalingam and Mr. Yogeswaran and injured Mr. Sivasithamparam.

On Thursday the 13th July 1989 Aloysius, Visu and Sivakumar all members of the LTTE met Messrs. Amirthalingam, Sivasithamparam and Yogeswaran at their residence in Colombo. The appointment had been arranged by Mr.Yogeswaran. In February 1989 the LTTE had invited the TULF leaders to their camp, when Mr. Yogeswaran visited them. During this visit to Pandikulam camp they received him well and gained his confidence. Following this Aloysius became very close to Mr. Yogeswaran. In fact Aloysius had visited Mr. Yogeswaran in his apartment on many occasions from the time LTTE commenced peace talks with the Sri Lankan Government. On that day when Aloysius spoke to Mr. Yogeswaran over the telephone, he requested him to waive the security check by the guards. Claiming 'Tamil brotherhood', he explained that his associates will feel let down if such searches were made.

Around 7 p.m. Aloysius, Visu and Sivakumar arrived at the residence of the Tamil leaders. Mr. Yogeswaran beckoned the security staff to send the three visitors in without the security check. While Sivakumar remained downstairs, Aloysius and Visu followed Mr.Yogeswaran to his apartment. After a while messages were sent to Amirthalingam and Mr. Sivasithamparam to come upstairs to meet the LTTE representatives. Refreshments were served by Mrs. Yogeswaran while the leaders were in discussion with the LTTE men. During the discussion Visu inquired from the leaders why they had not come to Pandikulam. Mr. Amirthalingam explained that due to the recent illness of Mr. Yogeswaran the fact that Mr. Sampanthan was in India, they could not make the visit. Furthermore it was pointed out that it would have been unwise to visit their camp as it would have exposed the hideout of the LTTE.

Mr. Amirthalingam then asked Visu about the progress of the talks the LTTE was having with the Sri Lankan government. Visu said that they were deluding the Sri Lankan government. Then Visu wished to know whether the TULF leaders would come to their lodge in Colombo for the next round of talks. Mr. Amirthalingam said that the venue was not satisfactory. Mr. Sivasithamparam proposed a private house in Colombo. Visu agreed to the suggestion on condition that the house be available for inspection prior to the meeting.

In the meantime one of the security officers downstairs became suspicious of Sivakumar because of his nervous behaviour, searched him and found ammunition and a grenade on his person. This security officer promptly alerted his fellow officers and rushed upstairs.

In the apartment, the discussion proceeded cordially and in good humour. Visu, who was next to Mr. Amirthalingam, stood up to place an empty tumbler on the table in front of him. While doing so he turned towards Mr. Amirthalingam and remarked , 'You may think that we are monsters, but we fear that you are the real monsters'. This provoked laughter among the leaders. At this juncture Visu drew a pistol and shot Mr. Amirthalingam in the head and chest. Next Mr. Yogeswaran who stood up was shot several times by Aloysius and Visu. By this time the security officer who had reached the balcony heard the shots, opened fire through the glass window at the assassins and wounded them. The wounded gunmen aimed their guns at Mr. Sivasithamparam but only succeeded in injuring him. As they ran down the stairs on either side of the house shooting at the guards, Visu attempted to throw a grenade but the security men shot and killed both of them. Sivakumar who was in the hallway was shot at, and later succumbed to the wounds.

The police later raided a house at Narahenpita, a suburb of Colombo and found arms, ammunition, cyanide capsules and detailed maps of the residence of the TULF leaders and a letter addressed to Aloysius by Mr. Yogeswaran.

The Statement added:

1. Visu alias Aravindaram was the area commander of the LTTE of Vadamarachchi in 1987. He also took part in the handing over of a captured IPKF soldier in June 1988.

2. Aloysius was the LTTE area commander for Vavuniya and participated in an early round of talks between the LTTE and the government.

3. Sivakumar was a member of LTTE.

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WEALTHY TAMILS ABDUCTED FOR RANSOM

At least twenty wealthy residents of Kalawanchikudy and Palagamam in Batticaloa have been abducted by members of a Tamil militant group in recent weeks and ransoms amounting to millions of rupees were being demanded for their release.

Among those kidnapped were businessmen, jewellers and landed proprietors. Ransom demands ranging from Rs. 5 million to Rs. 10 million had been made from each of them for their release.

The former Mayor of Batticaloa, M. Ambalawanar who was forcibly taken away from his Batticaloa residence over a month ago had still not been released by his abductors. A ransom of Rs. 5 million had been demanded for his 'safe release'. He is suspected to have been abducted by a Tamil group and his whereabouts were still not known. Some of those kidnapped do not have the means to meet such staggering ransom demands.

A member of Parliament in the region confirming the continuing spate of abductions of wealthy residents for ransom said that this dangerous trend was showing signs of spreading to other areas in the district.

The relatives of some of those kidnapped had not informed the Police or the IPKF through fear of reprisals. It is alleged that parents whose children were employed overseas had also been 'ordered' by Tamil groups to pay every month a sum of money stipulated by the militants. The number taken away for ransom could be much more as in most cases there is reluctance to complain to the Police or IPKF.

Complaints made to the Police and Indian Army have been investigated but it has not been possible so far to trace those who have been kidnapped.

Even in the northern Jaffna Peninsula, during the last two months there have been many businessmen who have been kidnapped followed by ransom demands running into millions of rupees for their release.

The Tamil groups comprising the Tamil National Council, EPRLF, TELO and ENDLF, have denied any responsibility for this spate of kidnappings.

RS.9 BILLION DAMAGE BY VIOLENCE

Sri Lanka has suffered losses up to an estimated Rs.9000 million because of the recent violence, President R. Premadasa announced at a meeting held on 3 November in the southern town of Matara.

The President gave the following breakdown of the losses: (a) Damage caused to private buses: Rs.16,000,000; (b) Losses suffered by the state owned Ceylon Transport Board: Rs.280,000,000; (c) Damage caused to the Railways: Rs.242,000,000; (d) Damage caused to government vehicles: Rs.100,000,000; (e) Damage caused to government buildings: Rs.960,000,000; (f) Losses suffered by Rural Banks: Rs.20,000,000; (g) Damage to telecommunications: Rs.200,000,000; (h) Damage to electricity installations: Rs.256,000,000; (i) Damage to tea industry: Rs.400,000,000; (j) Damage to the agricultural sector: Rs.250,000,000; (k) Damage to the industrial sector: Rs.200,000,000; (l) Damage to the mining sector: Rs.75,000,000; (m) Damage to the Banking and insurance sector: Rs.652,000,000; (n) Losses to the administrative sector: Rs.1600,000,000; (o) Losses in the service sector: Rs.500,000,000; (p) Production losses in the public and private sectors: Rs.2474,000,000; and (q) Damages caused to goods and services: Rs.6477,000,000.

MINISTER'S BODYGUARDS ON MURDER CHARGE

Four bodyguards of a senior minister who have been remanded in connection with the alleged killing of a UNP supporter have made an application to the Attorney-General for transfer from judicial to military custody.

Three UNP supporters, including the one who was killed are said to have come recently from Anuradhapura with a letter from a member of parliament from the North Central Province.

Having met the Minister, they were on their way back when they were abducted by the Minister's bodyguards. One of these UNP supporters was later found dead with gunshot injuries near St Joseph's College, Colombo.

Investigations led to the remanding of the bodyguards and the Minister's driver by the Fort Magistrate. An application for bail was refused by the Magistrate on the advice of the Attorney-General.

LAWYER ABDUCTED AND KILLED

Attorney-at-Law Mr. Sanath Bandara Karalliyadde who was practising at Teldeniya Courts was alleged to have been abducted by a gang of unidentified gunmen on the night of October 26 from his house at Karalliyadde. His body has been found near the Oruthota bridge, away from his house the following day (27th) morning, along with three other bodies of unidentified persons.

Thirty-year-old Lawyer Karalliyadde was one of the lawyers who looked after the interests of the school boy who died of police shooting at Teldeniya Maha Vidyalaya premises some time back. His clerk and another lawyer's clerk who were witnesses in the Teldeniya MV. police shooting case too were found killed a few weeks ago.

It is believed that these murders were carried out by members of the security forces.

400 SUSPECTS REFUSE TO ATTEND COURTS

Four hundred prisoners charged with involvement in subversive activity have refused to appear in court as they fear for their lives, following the killing in hospital of the first accused in the Harsha Abeywardene murder case recently.

A letter signed by over 400 suspected subversives has been forwarded by the Prison authorities to the High Court, where they are being tried.

High Court Judges have sought the assistance of the Attorney-General in the legal problems arising from the refusal of the accused to appear in court.

A recent amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure allows a High Court trial to continue in the absence of the accused if the Court feels satisfied with the reasons given (Article 8 in 21 of 88).

Legal sources point out that practical problems have arisen from the prisoners' refusal to appear in Court.

They say that the Prison authorities have the alternatives of letting the Court try the accused in absentia or taking the prisoners to Court by force, even at some risk.

The Court (trial-at-bar) hearing the Parliament bomb case on 30 October directed the Magazine Prison authorities to produce the accused before Court on the next trial day.

The Prison authorities, accordingly, will have to bring the accused by force to Court, even if this means risking the lives of prisoners and guards alike, another source added.

The same amendment also requires that a trial by the High Court at bar be heard from day to day, unless exceptional circumstances so warrant to ensure the expeditious disposal of these cases.

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **THE THREE ACCUSED** In the Air Lanka bomb attack case, S.A. Gunasingham, S. Kulasabanathan and B. Balachandran were freed by the High Court in Colombo on October 12 when the Attorney General announced that he did not wish to proceed with the case. The Attorney General's difficulty in proceeding with the case arose following a previous ruling by the Court upholding the defence objection that the 'confessional statements' obtained by the police from the defendants and sought to be admitted by the prosecution under the Prevention of Terrorism Act were not voluntarily made that they had been obtained by undue influence and torture.

● **MRS. MONHARI WATSON,** mother of two children, and who was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for her involvement in the Maradana bomb blast in which 38 persons were killed and 113 wounded in November 1987 was freed on 27 October. She was freed after spending two years in prison following an appeal by the LTTE. Several LTTE members from Jaffna were in Colombo to receive Manohari on her release.

● **SEVERAL COMPLAINTS** have been made to the authorities that police and army officers have committed rape against women in the south under the pretext of investigating 'subversive activities'. In this connection five police officers and four junior army officers are facing rape charges.

● **SOMASUNDARAM** Senathirajah, also known as Mawai Senathirajah, has been nominated by the Tamil United Liberation Front as its Member of Parliament in place of Appappillai Amirthalingam who was assassinated on July 13 this year. Mr. Senathirajah took his oaths before the Speaker on October 18.

● **FORMER HINDU AFFAIRS** Minister and ex-MP for Batticaloa, Mr. C. Rajadurai is to be appointed as High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in Malaysia. Other new appointments in the diplomatic arena are: Central Province Governor E.L.B. Hurulle is to be appointed as High Commissioner in Australia, the present Defence Secretary General Seypala Attygalle as High Commissioner in the UK and M. Gautamadasa of the Foreign Ministry as Ambassador to China.

● **OVER TWENTY DEAD BODIES** of young persons were found on 26 October outside three state-owned buildings, a Co-operative shop, rural bank and post office, which had been set on fire and destroyed previously allegedly by 'subversives'at Walpita in Divulapitiya. It is believed that these killings were carried out by the security forces in retaliation.

● **A MASKED MAN** pretending to be a member of the JVP who entered a house in the Sapugaskanda area raped the housewife and then walked out with her jewellery. The man's face was covered with a piece of cloth and he had told the woman that several members of the 'movement' had come to the area that day and were calling at every house. Then the man had brandished a knife and raped the woman whose husband was not at home at the time of the incident.

● **OVER 2000 PEOPLE** staged a demonstration on 30 October opposite the IPKF camp on the Vavuniya-Mannar road and submitted a memorandum on the alleged kidnapping of two persons belonging to the Tamil militant group. TELO, by the Sri Lankan army in Vavuniya. The demonstration was organised by the Tamil National Council and a hartal called by the TNC brought Vavuniya to a standstill. Following the kidnapping of the two TELO men, 18 Sri Lankan police personnel, including two National Intelligence Bureau officers, were abducted allegedly by TELO, but following the intervention by the IPKF, the Sri Lankan police personnel were released.

● **THE MALDIVIAN** authorities have inquired from the government of Sri Lanka whether 68 convicted mercenaries from Sri Lanka who participated in a failed coup attempt in November last year and sentenced to various lengths of imprisonment, including life, could be sent back to Sri Lanka to serve their sentences. When asked by newsmen, Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne is reported to have said, 'They left illegally, and attempted a coup What do we do with them if they are returned? As far as we are concerned, they can be dumped in the sea'. According to legal circles, Sri Lanka will have to take back her nationals as Article 14(1) of the Constitution says that every citizen is entitled to the freedom to return to Sri Lanka. But even if they are accepted by Sri Lanka, there is no provision under which they can be required to serve their sentences in a Sri Lanka jail as a sentence passed for a criminal act in another country has no validity in Sri Lanka.

● **TWO POLICE CONSTABLES** of Wadduwa police station were taken into custody on 29 October in connection with an alleged plot to kill the Officer-in-Charge of the police station, Inspector Samith Edirisinghe. On this day a Sub-Inspector and five constables attached to the same police station were taken into custody for their alleged involvement in the attack on the Field Force Head Quarters in Colombo. A police sergeant in charge of the anti-subversive unit at Tangalle in the south and a Sub-Inspector attached to the Depot Police, Narahenpita are also in detention for their involvement in this attack and alleged connections with the JVP. Security sources claimed that seven suspected 'subversives' were shot dead by soldiers who raided their hideout at Kamburupitya.

● **A PERSON IDENTIFIED** as Martin who was a supporter of the Communist Party was dragged out of his house and shot dead by an unknown gang on 30 October at Malimbada in Akuressa. Sub-post offices at Pallegama in Deniyaya and Godagama in Matara were looted and set on fire. At Batetta, a person identified as S.H. Dharmadasa was shot dead. Two armed youths stole a land-rover belonging to the Ministry of Rehabilitation valued at Rs.1,200,000 when it was proceeding to Jaffna from Colombo. The Ellagolla sub-post office, Grama Sevaka Office at Katupilagama and the Village Council office at Paglovita were set on fire in separate incidents. A youth identified as N.C. Nanasiri taken into custody for his alleged links with the JVP was allegedly clubbed to death by another suspect in the detention camp in Middeniya.

● **AT LEAST 25 PERSONS** including many women were killed in a rampage by security forces in Galnewa on 31 October following a landmine explosion in which the Officer-in-Charge of the Galnewa police station, Inspector Ratnapriya, and three other police officers were killed. A gang of 'subversives' armed with automatic weapons entered the house of Nandasena, a soldier on leave, and shot him dead in Badulla. At Thelijjawila in the south five burnt bodies were seen by people.

● **TROOPS RAIDED** a buddhist temple in the central province on 30 November and shot dead three persons alleged to be JVPers including a Buddhist Monk. The security forces claimed that the slain Monk, Pasgodaya Saranankara was an area leader and the coordinator of the JVP. An army deserter was also killed in the raid on the Pattigolle temple in the Kandy district.

● **ALLEGED 'SUBVERSIVES'** attacked a Sri Lankan army post at Agbopura in the Trincomalee district on 1 November and killed three soldiers of the Gajaba Regiment and wounded three others before fleeing with several automatic rifles and many rounds of ammunition. In Kamburupitiya a 'Roller' belonging to the Highways department was set on fire. In Colombo, security forces found an unidentified body at Vandervert Place. The buildings housing the Agrarian Services Centre and the Coconut Development Board at Madahapola were set on fire. Four tea factories were set on fire in Badulla.

Continued on Page 19

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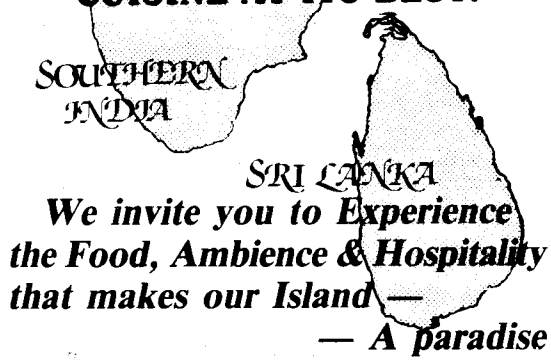

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NEWS ROUND-UP

● **AROUND FIFTY BODIES** of young persons riddled with bullets were found on 1 and 2 November in the Laggala police area as violence swept the Matale district. Nineteen bodies were found at Handungamuwa, Maraka and another location in the same area on 1 November. Most of the victims were identified as from the local area. On 2 November thirty-one bodies were found in the same area. The bodies were later loaded into trucks and taken away by the police.

● **THE INSPECTOR** General of Police has appointed a special CID team to investigate allegations of a plot to kill ten leading members of the Sri Lanka Mahajana Party (SLMP) including its leader, Mrs, Chandrika Wijekumaranatunga. A seven member team headed by an Assistant Superintendent of Police including two Inspectors has been assigned to investigate the alleged plot. The names of the investigators have not been divulged. It may be noted that Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranatunga is continuing to stay in the UK where she and her two children took refuge for security reasons following the assassination of her husband, Vijaya Kumaranatunga.

● **INFLATION RATE** in Sri Lanka rose by 13.3 per cent in the 12 month period ending October. The Colombo Cost of Living Index in October rose to 861.3 points in October from the September figure of 851.5 points. Prices of essential commodities have been sharply rising in recent weeks with wheat and sugar prices going up rapidly. Because of a shortage of foreign exchange in hard currency, Sri Lanka has been borrowing on the commercial market. Official sources confirmed that the inflation rate was around 17 to 18 per cent although the cost of living index was pegged at 13.3 per cent.

● **THE SRI LANKAN** government was supplying the LTTE with sophisticated weapons and ammunition and there was irrefutable evidence to prove this, the Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council, Mr. A. Varatharaja Perumal, claimed at a press conference held in Colombo on 4 November. The arms presently used by the LTTE were of Chinese and Israeli manufacture similar to those used by the Sri Lankan army, he added.

● **TWO SRI LANKAN** soldiers were reported missing in Vavuniya since 3 November. The soldiers who were returning after having been on leave were believed to have been abducted by members of a Tamil militant group.

● **FOUR PERSONS** were abducted by an unidentified armed gang at Unuwathurabubula in the Maha Oya area on 27 October. A newspaper office in Jaffna was attacked with bombs; although there were no casualties the buiding was damaged. An armed gang robbed Rs.99,000 from an oil mill owned by a senior army officer at Waskaduwa in the Kalutara district. Three civilians, two of them identified as D.R. Wickremasooriya and M. Fernando, were shot dead in the Walsmulla area by an unidentified gang.

● **A TOP LEADER** of the LTTE, Sathasivam Krishnakumar popularly known as 'Kittu' left for the United Kingdom on 29 October to seek medical treatment. About two years ago he lost a leg in a mysterious bomb attack in Jaffna where he was area Commander of the LTTE. Prior to leaving for London, Kittu had discussions with President Premadasa as a member of the LTTE delegation.

● **A POLICE CONSTABLE,** U.B. Wanninayake and six members of his family were hacked and shot dead at Galigamuwa on 4 November by suspected 'subversives'. In a separate incident on the same day, three 'subversives' were killed, two captured and several weapons recovered by the security forces in the Alawwa jungles in Nitambuwa.

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Bharatha Natya Arangetram in USA

A large crowd, estimated at 1000, attended the Bharatha Natya Arangetram of **Mirnalini Mohanraj,** daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Navaratnasingam Mohanraj recently. It was the first such event in Hartford County in Connecticut, USA.

Padmini Ramachandran awarded the diploma of the Padmini Institute of Fine Arts. Mirnalini is a student of that Institute and of Mrs. Hema Rajagopalan of Chicago.

The chief guest was the Honorable Nancy Johnson, senior member of the Connecticut delegation to the U.S. Congress. Mirnalini, who was accompanied by a live orchestra of artistes, gave a memorable performance.

She is the grand daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. C.V.E. Navaratnasingam and Mr. and Mrs. S. Anthonypillai.

Continued From Page 13

and outside the government, and the IPKF-EPRLF-ENDLF-TELO. Militarist and authoritarian, these alignments are destroying civil society in the name of various brands of patriotism.

I was back on the same SLAF plane that had brought me to Jaffna. And, as the plane rose into the air, I could not help getting sentimental. But such sentimentalism is a luxury when people down there are struggling for survival, and where so many brave men and women have decided to stay on and fight to the last. For me, it was a week of learning about a part of my society I was – to be honest – afraid to visit for seven years. As I looked down through the window, 'the golden rule' of Jaffna came to mind – and I marvelled how people could still communicate, still keep their humanity, still struggle, even when the 'golden rule' operated like an iron law. I was humbled.

(Certain sections of Prof. Shanmugaratnam's comprehensive account have been regrettably omitted for reasons of space)

Senior Tamils' Centre, Toronto

The fourth Annual General Meeting of the Senior Tamils' Centre was held on 23.9.89 at the Oriole Community Resources Centre, Don Mills and over 150 members and well-wishers were present. The following were elected office bearers. President: Aloy Ratnasingham, Vice President: Siva Gnanaratnam, Secretary: Siva Nathan, Treasurer: Fredrick Balasingham, Committee: Kingsbury Jeevanayagam, Duraipillai Subramani, Anne Canagaratnam, Mani Pathmarajah, Kanagambigai Ragunathan, James Balendra and C.T. Wijeyarajah. The Centre receives a government grant for its activities and has been provided free accommodation. It has a vibrant Bridge Club, and organises cultural cum religious activities and sightseeing tours for its members.

Tamil Broadcasting in U.K. *A weekly* **Tamil Service** *is being broadcast on* **Sunrise Radio,** *commencing on Monday, 6th November 1989 from 9 p.m. to 10 p.m. The broadcast is titled the* **Magazine Programme** *and is on the Medium Wave Band on 1413 KHz (212 m). The area of coverage is West London.*

Lavanya Top in Badminton

11-year-old Lavanya, pupil of Ratton school in Sussex triumphed in the recent English Schools Badminton Association's Southern Region Tournament held at Basingstoke.

She is the number one among under 12 players in Sussex and won 10 titles last year. She is now on course for a national ranking this year at the National Junior Badminton Championships to be held in Brighton in January. Lavanya is the only daughter of Badminton Ace Dr. Kum Vijendra and Shamala Vijendra of Eastbourne.

The London Tamil Congregation
Christmas Carol Service
Sunday, 10th December 1989 at 3.45 p.m.
Watch Night Service
Sunday, 31st December at 11 p.m.
(Coffee afterwards)
All are welcome
at
The Methodist Church
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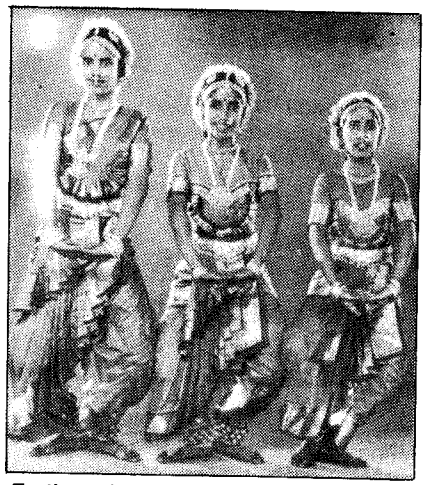
For further details please contact:
Mr Stanley Nalliah on:
01-542 3542



Forthcoming Bharatanatya Arangetram

The Bharatanatya Arangetram of Sudharshini, Niroshini and Anushini, daughters of Rev. Dr. Wesley and Mrs Shyamala Ariarajah will be held at the Logan Hall, Institute of Education, 20 Bedford way, London WC1H OAL on Saturday 6 January 1990 at 6.45pm. Since Rev. & Mrs Ariarajah do not know the address of many friends, they request friends and well-wishers to ring Mrs V.L. Singham in London on 01-672 9717 (after office hours) for personal invitation.

PERSONAL

Mr S. Chelliah *Attorney at Law, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka presently of 60 Blakes Lane, New Malden Surrey U.K. has been successful in the British Solicitors Final Examination, Summer 1989.*

Jaffna College Alumni Association U.K.
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Mr. C.P. Ilamurugan	*01-942 2263*
Mr. N.J. Rajaratnam	*01-422 6783*

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu Engineer brother *(Australian citizen) seeks preferably professionally qualified partner for sister, 29, B.Sc. graduate. M327, c/o Tamil Times.*

Parents *seek for orthodox Jaffna Hindu vegetarian young U.K. qualified software engineer daughter, 21, working in U.K., teetotaller professional partner, preferably also vegetarian. M 328 c/o Tamil Times.*

Accountant American citizen *mid 40, divorced, seeks pleasant, good natured, broad minded, unencumbered professionally educated lady. M 329 c/o Tamil Times.*

Mother *seeks suitable partner for Tamil, 41 year mechanical engineer son, Australian citizen. Reply with details, photograph, horoscope to M 330 c/o Tamil Times.*

Sister *seeks professionally qualified bride for Jaffna Hindu electronics engineer, 38, British citizen, working under contract in Chicago. Horoscope and details to M 331 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek attractive homely graduate partner for professionally qualified son, 32, teetotaller, employed Australia. Details returnable horoscope, photograph treated confidentially. M 332 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu family *seek educated partner, 35-40, for graduate bride. Write with horoscope, details M 333 c/o Tamil Times.*

Aunty *seeks partner for niece, 29, fair, goodlooking university lecturer. Reply with horoscope, details to M 334 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna mother *seeks professionally qualified partner for daughter, 30, B.Sc. graduate, British citizen. Final year students considered. M 335 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister *in Canada seeks partner for sister, 35. Residents from Canada are welcome. Reply with horoscope and details to M 336, c/o Tamil Times.*

Uncle *seeks Jaffna Tamil Christian professionally qualified partner for graduate qualified accountant nephew, early thirties, working in Canada. Details, photograph to M 337, c/o Tamil Times.*

Seeking *Tamil Catholic or Christian qualified bride, mid-twenties, for groom, Ph.D., 30, residing, working U.S.A. M 338, c/o Tamil Times.*

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WEDDING BELLS

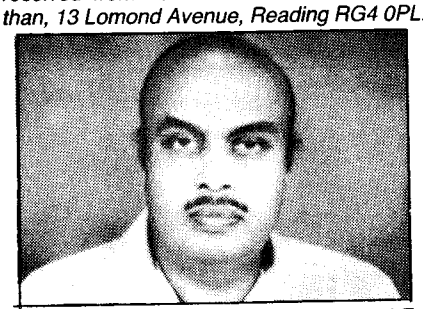
We congratulate the following couples on their recent marriage.

Rangarajan *son of the late Mr Rajeswaran and Mrs Ranganayaki Rajeswaran of Ranganathan Lane, Tellipallai, Sri Lanka and* **Priyadharshini** *daughter of Mr & Mrs Renga Cumarasamy of 168/9 Inner Flower Road, Colombo 3 at Hotel Taj Samudra, Colombo on 18.10.89.*

Dr Joseph Ravi Priyaraj *son of Mr & Mrs A Thampu Emmanuel of 13 Nightingale Lane, Bickley, Kent BR1 2QH and* **Mariana Srimanie** *daughrer of Dr & Mrs John St. George of 71 Albyn Road, Strathfield, NSW 2435, Australia at St. Joseph's Church, Bromley, Kent on 28.10.89.*

OBITUARIES

Mrs Thilagavathy Loganathan, *wife of the late Mr C. Loganathan, former General Manager, Bank of Ceylon and World Bank; mother of Sathananthan, the late Gowri, Dr Sritharan, Vasuki, Lalitha and Ketheswaran passed away on 8.10.89 in Colombo – Information received from her eldest son L. Sathananthan, 13 Lomond Avenue, Reading RG4 0PL.*



A.R. Surendra *(53) formerly mechanical Engineer, Ceylon Steel Corporation and later Rediffusion Simulation, Crawley, U.K.; eldest son of the late Mr Ragunather, formerly Head of Mechanical Engineering, Ceylon Technical College, and the late Thevanayagi; beloved husband of Sundaramani; father of Shankari, Ragunather, and Ramanan; brother of Ganendra (Sri Lanka), late Yogendra, Alagendra (Sri Lanka) and Mrs Ananthaluxmy Sutendra (Canada) passed away in Crawley, Sussex, U.K. on 28.10.89 – 2 Dedisham Close, Furnace Green, Crawley, Sussex RH10 6SA. U.K. Tel: 0293 24221.*

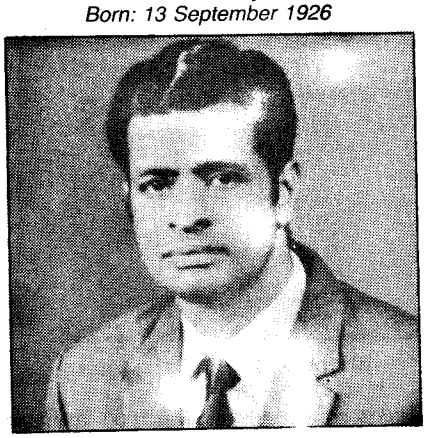
Dr. T. Rasaratnam *(Mani), 46, Consultant Anaesthetist, Regional Hospitals, South Yorkshire, U.K.; son of the late Mr Thambiah and Mrs Valliammai Thambiah of Kampanai, Chulipuram, Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Dr Renuka (U.K.), loving father of Madurika and Ramkumar; son-in-law of the late Mr Kumarasamy and Mrs Kumarasamy of Thirunelveli, Sri Lanka; brother of Mrs Kamalasani Ratnadurai and Mr Sethukavalar, Kandy General Hospital, Sri Lanka; passed away in Rotherham, U.K. on 16.10.89 – 49 Whiston Grange, Moorgate, Rotherham, South Yorkshire S60 3BG, U.K. Tel: 0709 370158.*

Mr. R.M. Gunaratnam (RMG), *former Vice-Principal, Hartley College, Pt. Pedro, Sri Lanka; father of Marcus (Australia), David (Trinidad), Sajo (U.K.) Thevi (Canada); father-in-law of Kamini, Cumudhini, Joe & Shan; passed away on 16.11.89. Funeral held on Wednesday, 22.11.89 at St. Matthew's Church, Chadderton, Oldham, 12 Rookwood, Chadderton, Oldham OL1 2TU, U.K. Tel: 061-633 7233.*

IN MEMORIAM

P.V. Nadarajah

Born: 13 September 1926



Passed away: 16 November 1989

Fondly remembered by his mother; wife Thilagavathy; children Usha Sivanathan, Varathan, Nalini and Nanthini; son-in-law, father-in-law, brothers, sisters-in-law and brother-in-law.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

December 2 *7.00 p.m. Violin by* **Dr. L. Subramaniam** *at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ Tel: 01-381 3036/4608*

Dec 3 *6.00 p.m.* **Arumuga Navalar Day Celebrations** *at Tooting Youth Project Hall, 7A Beechcroft Road, London SW17. All Welcome*

Dec 4th to 8th : Seventh International Tamil Research Conference in Mauritius. *For details contact Ministry of Education & Cultural Affairs, Mauritius.*

Dec 8 *7.30 p.m.* **Dance-Drama – Shakuntala** *at The Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High Street, London W8. Tel: 01-458 1233.*

Dec 9 *7.00 p.m.* **Bharatha Natya Arangetram** *of* **Vidya & Sathiya Kuganathan** *of Catford, London SE6. For invitations ring 01-697 4745.*

Dec 9 *7.30 p.m.* **Sitar** *by* **Mahmud Mirza** *at Kufa Gallery, 26 Westbourne Grove, London W2 Tel: 01-229 1928.*

Dec 22 to 24 Tamil Literary Conference *at Mehringof, Gneisenau Str 2a, 1000 Berlin 61.* **For Details contact:** *Tagung von Tamilen, Bildungswerk fur Demokratie und Umweltschutz e.V., Zeughofstr. 20, 1000 Berlin 36. Tel: 030 612 60 74/5.*

Dec 23 *4.30 p.m.* **Christmas Carols, Dance & Singing** *at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ.* **All welcome.**

Tamil Performing Arts Society *presents* **Tamil play** *Muham Illatha Manitharkal*

Nov 25 *6.00 p.m. Copeland Community School, Cecil Ave, Wembley, Middx.*

Dec 2 *6.30 p.m. Lola Jones Hall, Greaves Place off Garratt Lane, London SW17*

Dec 3 *6.30 p.m. Waltham Forest Theatre, Lloyd Park, Winns Terrace, London E17*

Dec 9 *6.30 p.m. Wimbledon Methodist Church Hall, Martin Way, London SW20*

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